AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF SCOTLAND,

ON

ECCLESIASTICAL AND CIVIL LIBERTY.

EDINBURGH:

Printed in the Year M, DCC, LXXXII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ON

ECCLESIASTICAL LIBERTY.

TO the love of eccleſiaſtical liberty, the people of every country in Europe owe any degrees of civil liberty they poſſeſs. And it muſt give pleaſure to men of liberal principles, to obſerve that ſpirit which animated our fathers ſtill continuing to animate their ſons. From certain advertiſements publiſhed in our news-papers, it appears, that ſentiments of eccleſiaſtical liberty have not yet deſerted the breaſts of a conſiderable body of citizens in the weſt and interior parts of this country. That which is moſt ſurpriſing is, that the upper ranks of men ſeem to have reconciled themſelves to that mode of ſettling churches which, of all others, is moſt expreſſive of their own inſignificance. Is it becauſe men of fortune have loſt all regard to religion and virtue, that they are ſatisfied with the arbitrary execution of the law of patronage, practiſed by this church for upwards of thirty years? Does not this mode of ſettlement put the whole body of landed gentlemen (patrons only excepted) upon the ſame footing, in the choice of a miniſter, as the meaneſt cottager of their eſtates? Nor is it poſſible to conceive a gentleman placed in a more contemptible ſituation than when a miniſter is obtruded upon him, his family, and his tenants, by the influence of a deacon or a bailie in a country burgh, who has the merit of having voted for a member of parliament. This influence is exerted in favour of a ſchoolmaſter, on account of the great care he has taken to correct and inſtruct the ſons and daughters of the magiſtrate for a courſe of years. If a calculation is made of the ſettlements of churches for ſeveral years paſt, it will be found, that ſchoolmaſters have filled a great number of our pulpits, in conſequence of a previous bargain ſtruck between them and their employers. Nor can the ſervile ſpirit, and the adulation of power, which

has diſgraced the church for many years, be better accounted for, than by tracing them up to the education of thoſe who have by ſuch pactions obtained preſentations. Much has been ſaid of ſimoniacal practices. Whether ſuch pactions do, or do not fall under this denomination, I leave it with you to judge. Certain it is, that gentlemen, who can afford their ſons a liberal education, do not now commonly train them for the pulpit; for thís plain reaſon, that young men of liberal principles and independent ſpirits, though poſſeſſed of the higheſt qualifications, will lie at the pool through life, if they have not obtained a patron by means of ſuch as have been repreſented.

When it is conſidered of what importance a good miniſtry is to the domeſtics, the farmers, and the whole vicinity of gentlemen, it is aſtoniſhing that they are not more attentive to the characters of ſuch as are candidates for vacant pariſhes! If they are not capable and zealous to inform the minds of the people, and impreſs their hearts with ſentiments of piety and ſound morals, what ſecurity can gentlemen have in tranſacting buſineſs in commercial or ſocial intercourſe? what confidence in their fidelity, their honeſty, their moſt poſitive averments? what reaſon to hope that their goods, their habitations, their perſons, ſhall remain inviolate? When men are deſtitute of a ſenſe of God and religion, they merit no confidence,—they are public enemies. But how are religious ſentiments to be infuſed into the minds of illiterate men? You will ſay, by the grace of God: But is not the grace of God conveyed by the uſe of means—the means of a faithful and zealous miniſter of the Goſpel? What reaſon have you to hope for ſuch a miniſtry, when our pulpits are filled by *young fellows*, who, aſſured of a preſentation many years before they think of theology, remain very careleſs of the moral or intellectual qualities of a miniſter of religion? Their intereſt, their ambition, are not concerned in theſe qualifications: theſe have not touched the ſprings of action in their hearts: the grand object, *a preſentation*, is aſcertained; and they have no apprehenſions when they come to paſs, when they recollect that many of their judges have been in the ſame predicament with themſelves, and therefore

fore will do by them as they themſelves have been dealt by. The grand affair is to read a ſermon with a theatrical grace. The buſineſs of a pedagogue has ſecured this important article, and the ſettlement is aſcertained.

Nor is the caſe exceedingly altered if the judges ſhould be of a different complexion. Men of the ſtricteſt piety and morals cannot penetrate the hearts of men; they cannot inveſtigate the character of a youth who has formed no character, who has perhaps never been in the country where his judges reſide, and who can be judged only by a few diſcourſes which may have been compoſed by another. But, why ſhould it be expected that that ſhould happen in a preſbytery which happens no where elſe? In no department of civil ſociety,—among lawyers, writers, officers of the cuſtoms and exciſe, in military life, and even in the higher political departments, men paſs muſter every day who are deſtitute of the neceſſary qualifications. And why ſhould more be expected from the clergy than other ſocieties of men? Is it becauſe they have fewer feelings, and are leſs apt to ſympathize with youth and inexperience? Certain it is, that a weaker excuſe cannot be given for beſtowing a preſentation on an illiterate or immoral man, than to alledge that, becauſe he has paſſed trials, therefore he is qualified. Will this apology be ſuſtained by the Supreme Judge? and is there any action in a man's life for which he muſt give a ſtricter account than the exerciſe of his right of preſentation?

Can any man of reflection hope for a proper ſet of clergy thus educated, and thus introduced into the miniſtry? Will they not naturally be haughty and inſolent to their people? Eſcaped from their maſters and miſtreſſes, who have lorded it over them, with abſolute ſway, through a tedious courſe of ſervitude, will they not carry it with equal imperiouſneſs towards the poor people whom they are taught to deſpiſe? Servility to their ſuperiors, inſolence to their inferiors, and a contempt of better men on a level with themſelves, characteriſe too many of thoſe who have thus been obtruded on a reluctant people. Fine gentlemen, as many of them wiſh to be eſteemed, and capable of cutting a figure in the circles of the gay and the giddy,—

giddy,—nay, of pronouncing a ſpeech in an aſſembly, vilifying the populace for their ignorance and preſumption, —as to ſcience, moral or theological, they are but novices; at leaſt, this is the opinion of men of true diſcernment, that, from the beginning of the preſent century, there has not appeared a ſet of clergy ſo ſuperficial in point of real learning, as theſe fine gentlemen who parade it at preſent with ſo much addreſs and aſſurance.

CAN you, men of Scotland, continue patient and reſigned in circumſtances ſo unfavourable to your ſacred intereſts? Is there any object of more moment to you, than the comfort of a learned and a godly miniſtry? ready on all occaſions to adapt their knowledge and piety to your particular circumſtances and capacities, who feel for your infirmities and wants, conſole you in trouble, and diſpenſe to you the bread of life with ſkill, patience, and charity. That happy connection which ſubſiſted between our fathers and their miniſters was productive of the moſt ſalutary effects. They were ſo united to each other as to form but one body; they were mutual ſupports to each other amidſt all the emergencies of life. Compacted together, they withſtood the ſhocks of the moſt difficult times. Civil government, when threatened with enemies abroad and at home, was often indebted to this happy union. The church of Scotland, free from ſectaries of all denominations, formed a firm and impregnable barrier, and rendered government reſpectable.

VERY ſenſible of this were the Tories when they plotted the reſtoration of the Pretender near the end of the reign of Queen Anne. To divide the church of Scotland, ever hoſtile to the introduction of a Popiſh Pretender, and to break the union which ſubſiſted between the clergy and the people, was the policy of the adminiſtration at that time. They knew that the reſtoration of the law of patronage would effect this deſign ſooner or later: they had not, indeed, power to reſcind the act of King William, appointing the election of miniſters by heritors and elders; but they reſtored patronage. The noxious influence of this law did not fully appear till after the lapſe of near forty years. Still the church conſidered it in the light of

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an intolerable grievance. She continually reclaimed againſt it, and hardly ever ſettled without a legal call. The moderation of the church preſerved a connection between the clergy and their congregations, and, in ſpite of the malignant ſpirit of patronage, the clergy were beloved by their people, and reſpected by government; and the influence of the church with the throne was ſo conſiderable, that, in many inſtances, they prevailed in warding off thoſe blows that were levelled at her by a latent, but inſidious and implacable enemy.

Now, alas! this happy connection is generally diſſolved. Much zeal and great addreſs have been employed by our rulers in order to produce a total alienation of mind and of heart.—Whence hath this zeal originated? Patronage is an engine of political power; corruption and venality have always diſtinguiſhed a tory adminiſtration; your clergymen of Scotland have become the tools of your enemies—to them they have ſold you; the price is thoſe emoluments they have ſo carefully monopolized; the leaders among them have engroſſed to themſelves, and to their creatures, all that the Crown can give to churchmen in this part of the iſland; their acquirements are the price of your liberty—I ſay, of your liberties and rights; for, if you have not liberty to chuſe your own miniſter, you are deprived of one of the moſt eſſential rights of Chriſtians. Do patrons and proprietors aſſert their excluſive right of chuſing becauſe they pay the clergy?—Nothing can be more obviouſly futile and falſe. Stipends are a part of the public ſtock, to which the meaneſt man who labours in the field contributes, as well as the firſt ſubject in the realm. It is your money, the money of the public, the fruit of your productive labours, that conſtitutes the ſtipend of the clergy: And will you ſuffer yourſelves to be robbed of a right to which you are as much entitled as to the bread which you earn by the ſweat of your brow?

THE *act* 10*th Queen Ann is ſtill in force, and can we counteract the law?*—It neither is, nor ever was in ſuch force, as to oblige the church to ſettle a miniſter, in oppoſition to a reluctant congregation. The ſame law was in force from

from the year 1712, and, for forty years thereafter the act 1690 was generally the rule of ſettlement notwithſtanding. Scarce was there an inſtance of a miniſter's being obtruded on a congregation. The power of collation is in the clergy; and it was their fixed belief, that to ſettle againſt the congregation was a violation of their rights.

THE *patron will retain the ſtipend.*—He cannot. Every ſubject patron is obliged to apply the vacant ſtipend to pious uſes within the pariſh, *at the ſight* of the preſbytery; and, if he attempted to retain it, he would be completely odious in the ſight of God and man; he would take advantage of a hard law to retain what he had no right to poſſeſs, in violation of the moſt ſacred rights of a reſpectable body of good citizens. In reſpect of thoſe preſentations which are in the gift of the Crown, it is to be preſumed, that his Majeſty's Servants will not ſacrifice their Maſter's moſt eſſential intereſts ſo far as to inſiſt on the ſettlement of a preſentee againſt the inclinations of the people. His Majeſty declares that the affections of the people are the ſupport of his throne: That Miniſtry, who, by the arts of oppreſſion, alienate the affections of the people from their Sovereign, are traitors to their truſt.

IF *patronage were aboliſhed, or rendered conſiſtent with the conſtitution of the church, what rule of ſettlement can be eſtabliſhed in its room?*—The act eſtabliſhing preſbytery at the revolution, and aboliſhing patronage, requires that churches be ſettled by a majority of heritors and elders; and the conſent of the people was, by the practice of the church, from the year 1690, till about thirty years ago, conſidered as eſſential to the ſettlement of a miniſter, and controverſies reſpecting ſettlements were ultimately determined by the ſupreme judicature of the church. When the act 10th Queen Ann is attentively conſidered, it will appear, that the right of election in heritors and elders, contained in the act of the ſettlement of preſbytery, was not reſcinded. The Miniſtry had not power at that time to venture upon ſo ſtrong a ſtep. It was then conſidered as in force, notwithſtanding the reſtoration of patronage, and ſtill is in force, notwithſtanding the zeal expreſſed by clergy and laity

lajty in General Aſſemblies to conſider it as repealed; and it will be found that this mode of ſettlement is incomparably preferable to any other that has been projected. Heritors have an intereſt both civil and ſacred in the choice, and every perſon paying ceſs and ſtipend out of his property is an heritor; nor will elders, who repreſent the people, betray the confidence repoſed in them, implied in their election to that ſacred office, and comprehended in their ordination vows.

Divisions *and animoſities occur in the mode of ſettlement propoſed. A preſentation is deciſive.*—Deſpotiſm is the moſt deciſive form of government; the arbitrary will of the deſpot ſilences all complaint, and pronounces the doom of thouſands of innocents without controul; liberty is too precious a gift for mortals to enjoy without alloy; diſputes originating in the paſſions of men are inſeparable from freedom; nor is there any good inſtitution without a certain mixture of inconvenience.—Who does not admire the conſtitutions of Greece and Rome?—Who does not regard with horror the deſpotic ſway of Turks and Moguls?—Men of arbitrary principles look upon every exertion of liberty, and all its ebullitions, as faction and ſedition. Appius, when controuled in his project of enſlaving his country, declaimed on faction and ſedition;—and ſo will all the partizans of power, when their plans of domination meet any degree of reſiſtance.

Observe, my friends and brethren, that the conſtitution of your church is republican. Preſbytery is formed on the model of a commonwealth; patronage ſavours of arbitrary government; patronage breathes the ſpirit of unlimited monarchy. Perhaps it may ſuit the mode of church government by biſhops and archbiſhops; but it is in diametric oppoſition to the genius of preſbytery. The dignitaries, and ſuch as would be dignified by the honours and emoluments peculiar to hierarchy, are fond of patronage, becauſe it is congenial to their principles, and calculated to flatter their paſſions. But thoſe of your church will check and ſuppreſs paſſions ſo contrary to thoſe vows in which they ſwore fealty to preſbyterian government. Is not a call from the congregation an eſſential branch of

this government? and will men diſpenſe with this inſtitution, or appoint a ſettlement, without any call, in direct violation of the conſtitution, and, at the ſame time, affect to hold vows and oaths to be ſacred engagements?

MAY *we not deliver ourſelves from thoſe corruptions which threaten this church with ruin, by connecting ourſelves with diſſenters?*—Flatter not yourſelves with the imagination that you will find any body of diſſenters exempted from corruptions. Among them you may connect yourſelves with many decent and ſerious perſons; and if decency and ſeriouſneſs have become leſs prevalent among us now than heretofore, it muſt conſole every good man, in ſome meaſure, to recollect, that they have not wholly deſerted our country.—Waving what may be ſaid reſpecting the various ſects into which you have ſplit, let me aſk, are there not ſtill many ſerious Chriſtians in this church, and of the clergy not a few, of true learning and godlineſs?—It is wrong to charge Miniſters in the groſs with the errors in government into which this church has fallen. We have ruling elders, who rule over all the ambitious and aſpiring among the clergy—elders of high rank and fortune—officers of ſtate—patrons with the influence, and under agents of the Crown. If the numbers and intereſts of this order of men, with the principles they adopt, and cauſe they eſpouſe, are taken into conſideration, candour will allow for the effects they produce on the deciſions of the church, and acknowledge that, though many of them are erroneous, a very conſiderable body of the miniſters are blameleſs. Nay, whoever attentively conſiders the records of our Aſſemblies, will find that many judgments which have received their ſanction could not have been pronounced, if a great majority of miniſters had not been averſe from the arbitrary execution of the law of patronage.

WHAT, my brethren and friends, are the effects of a wanton ſeparation from the eſtabliſhed church? Is it a light thing to break that union which the glorious Head of the church has eſtabliſhed, and ſanctified among Chriſtians? Is not this union explained, recommended, and enjoined by Chriſt and his Apoſtles in the moſt decided terms? Can any thing leſs

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than being obliged to violate ſome plain law of religion or morality, juſtify a man in ſeparating from the great body of Chriſtians denominated the *Church?* Has not the King of the Church taken into his own hands the cenſure due to a breach of the great law of union?—Far be it from us to judge harſhly of our brethren gone out from among us: But in what light will we be beheld by him who preſides in his church, if we can entertain a ſerious thought of deliberately tearing aſunder, and lacerating that body which he has ſanctified and ſaved—of deſerting that communion to which he continues to vouchſafe his countenance, and weakening the hands of thoſe miniſters who are honoured with the communications of his grace?

But *you are better edified without than within the eſtabliſhed church.*—Perhaps you are more gratified—you are better pleaſed; but obſerve, that the moſt palatable food is not always the moſt nouriſhing;—does not providence place you often in thoſe circumſtances that demand the ſacrifice even of your edification? You attend the ſick-bed of a friend, when you might be much more edified by attending the worſhip of God? Is it a light thing to loath the proviſion appointed you in providence, becauſe it is not perfectly adapted to your taſte? When God has aſſigned you inſtitutions, which he requires you to obſerve after the due order, is it ſafe for you to ſpurn at his appointments, and reject the ordinances of divine allotment?—If, by your example and influence, paſtors called and ordained of God ſhall be deprived of their flocks,—will the edification you imagine you ſhall receive compenſate for the injuries you do to multitudes, or will it prove a counterpoiſe to the breach you make of the union and peace of the church of God? Are not ſtrife, variance, and diſſention, far greater evils than the want of that degree of edification you deſire can prove to you? And, permit me to inſiſt upon it, that to divide from that great ſociety of Chriſtians with which providence hath connected you, under the influence of prejudice, caprice, pride, or any other malevolent or intereſted principle, is a crime of the firſt magnitude.

In order to obtain that edification which every good man earneſtly deſires, let me beſeech you attentively to conſider the character and qualifications of the perſon who is a candidate for the charge of that pariſh where providence has ordered your lot. If his character is doubtful, or his qualifications unſuitable to the ſtation he wiſhes to fill, oppoſe his induction by all legal methods; let all your authority and influence be employed to obtain the ſettlement of an unexceptionable paſtor. And if a candidate is elected by a majority of them who were formerly termed legal voters, conſider his ordination as the appointment of God—for, in all ſocieties whatſoever, the minority is under the ſtricteſt obligation to acquieſce in the judgment of the majority.

But, that the choice of a proper paſtor may be free and conſtitutional, it is incumbent on all who have any concern for whatever is held ſacred among men, to employ every method, conſiſtent with a due ſubmiſſion to government, to obtain a deliverance from the intolerable yoke of patronage,—a nuiſance without the removal of which the church muſt ſink into nothing. Patronage will always prove the inſtrument, in the hands of deſigning men, of diſappointing all our hopes of union or of reformation. We will decline from bad to worſe, till our churches are deſolated. Scarce does an Aſſembly riſe without driving from the church ſeveral thouſands of her members. Hundreds of thouſands are already numbered by the diſſenters, beſides Epiſcopalians and Papiſts, (who are always very forward in ſupporting preſentations). Above a twelfth part of the church have forſaken her communion, thro' the petulance, the ſervility, and deſpotic principles of thoſe they call moderate men. Certain it is that a diſſenting intereſt has encreaſed, and is ſtill encreaſing; that civil ſociety and ſocial intercourſe are thereby greatly obſtructed; animoſities and diſſenſions prevail in every pariſh, and the diſſocial paſſions reign in triumph. Contention and every evil work have occupied the place of that cordial union, and thoſe generous affections, which our fathers cultivated with great ſucceſs. All, all this, and more than I have leiſure or inclination to deſcribe, are the woeful effects of patronage;—Patronage, which has proved

proved for many years the grand obſtructor of the progreſs of religion, the dire engine of corruption and tyranny, the cruel foe of peace and harmony, the nurſe of faction, and the refuge of vice.

A ray of hope breaks through the gloom, and affords us ſome proſpect of relief. An adminiſtration, of unequalled ability and liberality of ſentiment, hath, in the courſe of providence, been raiſed up, we hope, at this tremenduous criſis of public affairs, not only in ſupport of civil, but alſo eccleſiaſtical liberty. Familiar as ideas of patronage have always been to the minds of Engliſhmen, a diſtinct account of the nature of our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, its inconſiſtency with the principle of patronage, the habits of thinking peculiar to this part of the iſland, the averſion of its inhabitants from hierachy and ſuperſtition, their height of ſpirit, always impatient of reſtraint in religious matters—the fatal effects of the arbitrary exerciſe of the rights of patrons, with the obſequiouſneſs of the leaders in the church to the great, to whom they have ſacrificed the ſtrength, the beauty, and the utility of the church,—all this, held up to the view of a virtuous adminiſtration, it is hoped, may reconcile them to the object of our wiſhes.

Our preſent rulers have expreſſed a juſt jealouſy of the increaſing power of the crown. ſhew them that patronage had in Scotland been applied by the ſervants of the Crown to no other purpoſe than to promote the intereſt of the Court in Parliament; that it has been a powerful engine of corruption, and deſtroyed that freedom of Parliament which is ſo eſſential to political liberty. Demonſtrate to thoſe in power, that as patronage was reſtored by the enemies of liberty and the royal family, the exerciſe of it has contributed to alienate the hearts of the people from their government, to produce murmuring and diſcontent in the minds of men, to exaſperate them againſt their rulers and to embitter their ſpirits againſt one another. Shew them without reſerve the amazing deſertion of the people from our eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment, the immenſe ſums drawn from a poor people, and alienated from the common ſtock for erecting meeting-houſes, and endowing them

them. Point out to them the vaſt multitudes of his Majeſty's ſubjects placed under the tuition of teachers, many of whom are deſtitute of the benefits of a regular or liberal education; and upon the whole, convince them that liberty, of which they have hitherto approved themſelves patrons, requires an abrogation of the Act 10 the Queen Ann, or at leaſt ſuch a qualification of it as may prevent in future the evils complained of.

Patrons, and the whole ariſtocracy, will oppoſe the project with great violence; and great is their influence at Court. Hitherto applications to the legiſlative body on this account have proved ineffectual, and if no check is given to the ariſtrocracy which hath long governed this country, neither this, nor any other branch of political liberty, will be reſerved to us. Still it may be hoped, that ſound policy will determine our preſent rulers to lend an ear to the great body of people in this kingdom, without permitting their judgment to be warped by the biaſſed repreſentations of perſonages even of the higheſt rank, who are fond of power, and have long remained in the uncontrouled exerciſe of domination.

Nor ought our great ones, if they conſult their real intereſts, to ſtretch their power beyond the limits preſcribed by humanity and juſtice. It is but the recovery of an unalienable right that is requeſted by the great body of the nation;—of a right wreſted from them by men of arbitrary principles, by ſurprize, and even in a ſurreptitious manner. Why will men of honour continue tenacious of a power incompatible with the rights of thoſe they ought to comfort and protect? Is it ſafe for the great to inſult the many, by continuing to contemn their remonſtrances, their requeſts, their moſt humble ſupplications? Have not the nobility, in other inſtances, by inſiſting pertinaciouſly on their powers, involved themſelves and their country in ruin?

The Plebeians in Rome, while treated with lenity by the ſenators, lived quietly in ſubmiſſion to the laws enacted by the latter; but the former, finding their rights infringed in contempt of their complaints and petitions,

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gradually perceived their own importance in the ſcale of government, and, after a courſe of reciprocal encroachments, the balance of power was loſt; the ſenators became cyphers in the ſtate, and the reſult of the ſtruggle was the introduction of the moſt miſerable deſpotiſm that ever degraded or diſgraced human nature. Good politicians have often remarked, that laws from which the body of the people are averſe, how ſalutary ſoever, ought never to have been enacted, or, if enacted, ought to be repealed. The law of patronage, ſo far from being ſalutary, can ſubſerve no purpoſe, but to increaſe the power of an ariſtocracy already too powerful, and to add to that ſyſtem of corruption become already far too prevalent. It runs counter to the inclinations, becauſe it violates the rights, of all his Majeſty's ſubjects (a few members of the ariſtocracy only excepted), and, if inſiſted upon, may be productive of accumulated diſorders, to which every good man muſt feel in his breaſt the utmoſt repugnance. Our rulers, animated with truly political ideas, will beware of forcing the people to perceive their own powers. Inalienable rights will not always continue to be invaded with impunity: Nor ought it to be forgotten, that ſentiments which have long been accuſtomed to run in one channel, though they may be forcibly diverted for a ſeaſon, will not fail to recur to their wonted current: It is alſo worthy remark, that power, in places remote from the ſeat of government, operates againſt liberty in proportion to its diſtance.

An *illiterate and fanatical clergy muſt neceſſarily be the effect of this popular plan of election.*—This hackneyed objection falls to the ground, when we conſider the character of the clergy who filled the pulpits in this church for fifty years from the Revolution. Their ſuperiority to the preſent incumbents will be chearfully acknowledged by all who knew them. In point of piety, literature, and prudent abſtraction from the world, there can be no compariſon. Your clergy of late, it is true, have made ſome figure in the Belles Lettres: they merit the encomiums of the polite world, and do honour to their country.—Theſe are but very few; but in point of the qualifications above mentioned, you will not venture any compariſon.—

Theſe

These respectable pastors were settled upon the plan proposed to you; and, were it steadily adhered to, would in due time produce a marvellous change to the better in the affairs of the church. Instances, indeed, occur in which the people, when permitted their choice, have chosen candidates far inferior in point of character and abilities to those proposed by the patron.

But these instances are few when compared with the great numbers imposed by the power of the patron, violently, on a reluctant people. True it is that the taste of the people has nothing in it of elegance or refinement; but it will bear a comparison with the taste of those who commonly take upon them to contemn the judgment of the middle and lower classes of men, and impose upon them, with great violence, those from whom they are averse. The former have generally the fear of God, and some degree of the religious principle by which they are determined in their choice of a minister; but it is matter of regret that a total forgetfulness of God, dissipation, selfishness, and vanity, are very striking features in the character of those who figure in the circles of the gay and the great.

This circumstance renders it probable, at least, that the middle and lower classes of men will form a truer judgment of the qualifications of a teacher by whom they may be best instructed. The heritors and elders of any parish are most interested in the character of a minister, and will be incomparably more cautious in their choice, than a patron who does not reside, or who has no interest in the parish, or a magistrate in a burgh, or a member of Parliament, who would secure his election, by obliging with a royal presentation such as he expects will favour him in return.

I have held up to your view, my friends and countrymen, a plan for liberty and religion, justified by the practice of the church from her earliest ages, and as old as the establishment of Christianity in the reign of the Emperor Constantine, and continued till the corruptions of Popery had defaced religion, and extinguished all sense of order

order and liberty in the minds of its profeſſors. A multitude of topics, perhaps of equal or ſuperior weight, might be propoſed to your conſideration, to excite your zeal, and animate you to a due exertion of your influence in ſupport of a cauſe connected with your deareſt intereſts. Let me only beg that you will deliberately conſider that patronage, if properly and candidly inveſtigated, will be found to originate in ſuperſtition, and is a relic of Popery. It is congenial to the hierarchy of the Romiſh church, and breathes the ſpirit of deſpotiſm. Diametrically oppoſite to a republican conſtitution, it unhinges the whole frame of Preſbyterian government.

It is calculated to introduce among you a lax, an illiterate, and improper clergy; to diſſolve that connection which ought to unite miniſters with their people, and to introduce faction, diſcord, and diviſion, in the church.—It hath already driven a twelfth part of her members out of her communion, and produced diſorders and miſchiefs which, if perſiſted in, will in time annihilate your eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment.

Patronage is the engine of political corruption, renders the people averſe from government, and the clergy incapable of contributing to their loyalty to their Prince, or influencing them to ſupport government in times of difficulty and danger. The preſent is the moment you are required to ſeize, to obtain deliverance from a calamity which hath been the ſubject of complaint, and the deepeſt regret, for many years paſt. In vain will men affect a lively concern on this important ſubject, who will not embrace the preſent opportunity. In vain will they profeſs among their friends a zealous anxiety for the deliverance of the church, if they do not now openly and avowedly ſtand forth the advocates of a cauſe on which her exiſtence ſeems to depend. Profeſſions, you all know, unattended by ſuitable practice, prove their authors groſs hypocrites. Are any of you capable of ſuch indolent inattention to the liberty, to the conſtitution, to the ſacred intereſts of your friends and poſterity, as to remain inactive when you are ſolicited to ſtrain every nerve in a cauſe ſo honourable, ſo beneficial, and ſo worthy the ſpirit which animated your anceſtors, who ſpilt their beſt

blood to procure you the bleſſings of liberty? Men who boaſt of their caution and prudence, and whoſe proceedings originate in puſillanimity and ſelfiſhneſs, will diſcover many apologies, and plauſible excuſes, for with-holding their influence in the preſent criſis. But all men of ſpirit and candour will be at no loſs to interpret ſuch conduct as it ought. If the preſent is not the proper time, no future period can reaſonably be expected more propitious: nor indeed will any occaſion of doing good be conſidered in the proper light by men whoſe zeal evaporates in empty profeſſions. But it is hoped that men of ability, of influence, of piety, and of prudence, will lay hold on the fair occaſion which now offers itſelf to the wiſhes of the truly religious; for ſuch an opportunity as the preſent will not probably again recur. Nor is it poſſible to conceive how men poſſeſſed of theſe qualities and talents, can employ them more for the honour of God, and the comfort of all good men.

It is not from General Aſſemblies that you can expect much relief. Perhaps the preſent are ſtill more zealous partizans of patronage than the late rulers of the church. They want the experience, the diſcernment, the mild addreſs, and candid eloquence, of him who was diſtinguiſhed above all others by his authority and influence in former Aſſemblies. That avowed contempt of the people, that petulant inſolence to thoſe who differ from them, that domineering ſpirit of perſecution, and that open apoſtacy from the moderate and orthodox habits of thinking and acting, which rendered your fathers ſo truly venerable, are characteriſtic of thoſe who now would manage your Aſſemblies. From them, therefore, you may expect every diſcouragement. Still there are in the church as many of the laity and clergy as may conduct the object of your wiſhes to a comfortable iſſue; only be not diſcouraraged by caſual obſtructions. Act with vigour and firmneſs, and aſſociate for a purpoſe ſo intereſting to your wiſhes. Above all, ſecure to your cauſe the patronage of the glorious Adminiſtrator of his church, by a ſteady adherence to truth, a gentle forbearance to thoſe who differ from you, and a lively faith in the protection of that power, who will reward your honeſt endeavours in this and a better world.

ON

ON

CIVIL LIBERTY.

FROM the memorable events of the preſent times, taken in connection with the liberal principles of thoſe now in adminiſtration, we have reaſon to conclude, that many of the people have diſcovered their rights, and have courage to ſet bounds to arbitrary power. North America has expoſed herſelf to moſt cruel calamities, and is become free. Ireland has vindicated her rights, and her noble endeavours are crowned with ſucceſs. The Commons of England ſeem to emerge from venality and corruption, breathe a purer air, and emulate their anceſtors in their zeal for liberty and virtue. The grand object of our patriotic miniſters, to purge the Houſe of Commons of ſervile dependants, and to rectify the repreſentation of the people in Parliament, muſt intereſt the wiſhes of every honeſt man.

SHALL the inhabitants of Scotland be diſtinguiſhed by a ſervile and ſupine indifference reſpecting their moſt invaluable rights, when his Majeſty's other ſubjects, with a becoming ardour of ſpirit, vindicate thoſe liberties which add dignity to human nature? When the liberal propoſition was made in Parliament to reform the repreſentation of England, one worthy citizen of this country ſtood ſingle and unſupported, when he requeſted that the reformation ſhould extend to Scotland. Since the year 1707 you have been excluded that proportion of liberty which has been enjoyed by England, in conſequence of a compact made by your fathers. At that time they were under the influence of the terror of thoſe cruel ſeverities by which England had oppreſſed this country abroad and at home. A deſpotic ariſtocracy has continued ſince that period to controul and overawe you, and with all that boaſt of liberty, which hath been ſo loud

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and clamorous, the middle and lower ranks of this country have hardly been able to taſte the ſweets of freedom. The members of an ariſtocracy have monopoliſed the bleſſings of government, and carefully retained in their pay a choſen band of their inferiors, who have celebrated the praiſes of a government, the benefits of which were confined to themſelves and their employers.

But what good reaſon can be alledged why you may not be as free as your neighbours? Have you not the ſame right to liberty? Why are the rights of the repreſentation of this country wrapped up in myſterious laws, which the learned alone can explain? Forty ſhillings of landed property intitles an Engliſhman to vote for a commiſſioner of Parliament. In Scotland near the ſame number of pounds, of old valued rent, are neceſſary.

The *Articles of the Union of the two kingdoms circumſcribe and define the qualification of voters.*—But have not you the ſame title to change the repreſentation that your fathers have adopted? Are you bound by a convention concluded by a junto, in contradiction to the opinions, the remonſtrances, the prayers of nine-tenths of the country? It is true, that the Union to us hath produced many ſalutary effects. Still our repreſentation in parliament is by all men of thought conſidered as illiberal, and repugnant to juſtice and ſubordination. Is it rational, that a mean fellow in a trifling burgh ſhall be entitled to vote for a commiſſioner to parliament, while a gentleman in the country of rank and affluence is unqualified,—that in a city a few who have got into power, ſhall remain in it for ever, to the excluſion of thouſands of ſuperior ability and fortune, —that the great body of the people, thoſe of moſt reſpect and uſefulneſs in the commonwealth, ſhall have no repreſentation, no protection of their rights, no liberty!

The Helots in Greece were not on a more illiberal footing in this reſpect than the merchants, the farmers, the moſt reſpectable artificers in this country. Ariſtocracy ſaddles you with heavy taxes, whilſt you are diſqualified even for remonſtrating againſt them. This body of men procures acts of parliament oppreſſive and intolerable, whilſt

whilſt no reſource remains for the ſufferers but to mourn over thoſe chains which ſtill become more and more burdenſome. Perhaps a greater inſtance of oppreſſion does not occur in Turkey, than what is practiſed in this country! Your grandees obtain a law to aſſeſs the farmers in a county in a tax of more amount than the land-tax. They aſſume to themſelves the excluſive adminiſtration of it; they apply it to purpoſes foreign to the intereſts of thoſe who pay the tax, whilſt the complaints of the induſtrious farmer are treated with contempt and accumulated oppreſſion.

Are your grievances without remedy? Will not the noiſe of the burſting chains of others awaken in you a virtuous anxiety and impatience to be delivered from thoſe which have long continued to bind you, and which every day increaſe in their weight? Have you been ſo long inured to ſervility and thraldom, that, through the force of habit, you are reconciled to inſignificance? Are you afraid to perceive your own ſtrength, or to recognize your natural rights? Four hundred years have elapſed ſince Engliſhmen diſcovered and aſſerted their rights, and never loſt ſight of them amidſt all the viciſſitudes of government. In particular, the right of taxing themſelves they maintained when they ſeemed to have yielded up every other claim to deſpotiſm. Have our Lords and Eſquires an excluſive right to liberty? Are they the only uſeful members of ſociety? Is freedom circumſcribed by titles and by birth? Are the great the only wiſe and worthy citizens? Is merit neceſſarily connected with fortune? And have all the learning, penetration, ſagacity, and virtue of human nature taken up their reſidence with wealth and honours?

Is there any good reaſon why civil cauſes ſhould receive their decision only from this order of men, to the excluſion of a jury of peers of the parties concerned? In criminal caſes this right is preſerved to the people of this part of the iſland; why are they denied it in every other, whilſt thoſe of England are in poſſeſſion of it in all? Are men of inferior rank poſſeſſed of leſs good ſenſe, leſs perception of the difference betwixt right and wrong,—leſs probity,

probity, leſs religion than thoſe of the ſame claſs on the other ſide the Tweed? Why ſhould the latter boaſt of a privilege ſo highly intereſting to the rights of human nature, whilſt the former are left to lament, without remedy, the want of a branch of liberty ſo truly valuable?

Men of Scotland, conſider your natural rights, and have the ſpirit to aſſert them! Long, very long have you been excluded from many of the privileges of men and citizens; now is the happy moment which invites you to vindicate the bleſſings of free-born Britons: Seize it! Loſe not an inſtant! Sentiments of liberty are breathed in every department of government. Thoſe generous principles which glow in the breaſts of the men who fill the firſt ſtations in adminiſtration, ſolicit your addreſſes,—they will exult at the proſpect of a nation claiming their natural rights under their auſpices. Confide in the grandeur of their ſpirit, and you cannot be diſappointed.

Let not the illiberal and contracted principles of a few among yourſelves, deter you from your duty to your country, your families, and poſterity. If men of rank can diſcern their own importance, they will count it their honour to ſupport your claim of liberty. They are not all ſo intoxicated by vanity and the love of power, as to deſpiſe the natural and acquired rights with which merchants, tradeſmen, farmers, and the clergy of various denominations, are endowed. High rank, and a polite education, are the advantages of many members of the preſent ariſtocracy; but good ſenſe, piety, and free and virtuous principles, are generally the endowments of the middle ranks of men. Our gentlemen of fortune know for whoſe ſake they rule,—who veſted them with authority, who have power to deprive them of it, to whom they muſt have recourſe in times of danger for protection,—and by means of whom they can continue to enjoy their affluence in ſecurity. The wiſe and the ſober will judge with candour; the noble and generous will ſupport your claim: the lovers of Caledonia will triumph in an opportunity of contributing to her liberty;—nor can any Scotſman of worth heſitate to intereſt his warmeſt wiſhes, that the ſame meaſures of liberty to this, that have long been the bleſſings of our ſiſter kingdom.

Observe, with gratitude, men of Scotland, the confidence repoſed in you by your preſent rulers. They invite you to accept of arms in defence of your perſons and properties, againſt your foreign enemies. A man deprived of his arms is a ſlave. The Romans diſarmed the Britons after they had conquered them, and, for near four hundred years, laboured to civilize and enrich them. But when their conquerors were forced to deſert them, theſe rich and poliſhed Britons, ignorant of arms and their uſe, became a prey to your brave anceſtors, and afterwards the ſlaves of warlike invaders. Reſume, Caledonians, reſume your arms. Diſplay the ardent ſpirit of your heroic anceſtors. It is for all that ought to be held dear among men that you are required to exert your utmoſt vigour. What avails your property if you have not power to protect it?—Your trade, your manufactures, your corn, your cattle, are held by a moſt precarious tenure, if you want ſkill and ability to defend them. Let it appear to the conviction of all the world, that you have no occaſion to flee for protection to an army of mercenaries, whoſe bayonets may be turned againſt your own breaſts, in conſequence of the jealouſy or caprice of a tyrant. The amiable character of the Prince upon the throne renders apprehenſions on this ſcore wholly groundleſs: But who knows what principles may animate the miniſters of ſome of his ſucceſſors?—Why ſhould you think of holding your lives and fortunes at the mercy of any invader, when God and good men have put it in your own power to protect yourſelves?—Will you think of loading yourſelves and your poſterity with heavy taxes, in ſupport of a ſtanding army, when you are invited to prove, by your own courage and magnanimity, that you are more than equal to the taſk of protecting yourſelves?—It is now in your power to demonſtrate the futility of every argument adduced in favour of an internal military force, for the protection of free men. It is a golden opportunity now put into your hands!—For the ſake of your liberties, your properties, your children, your wives, and, I add, of your religion, and all your privileges as men and Chriſtians, embrace it. Let not men of arbitrary principles—let not men of titles and fortune, ſnatch from you the fair occaſion which providence has put in your power

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of conferring on your country, yourſelves, and your poſterity, the moſt indelible obligations. By improving the propitious moment you may be ſafe, happy, and free, and entail thoſe bleſſings on future generations. If you heſitate—if you ſlight or neglect it, you muſt tranſmit your names with infamy to all future generations. You will be claſſed with thoſe Cappadocians who refuſed liberty when offered to them by the brave Roman people. The bleſſing was never reſtored to them, and they continued to be execrated on account of the debaſement and degradation of their ſpirits.—Demonſtrate, men of Scotland, demonſtrate to thoſe brave patriots who now govern you, that you are entitled to thoſe claims of liberty you propoſe to their conſideration. Merit from them, and from your country, that importance in the commonwealth to which you aſpire. Prove, to the conviction of the world, your title to the ſame extent of liberty with your brethren of England; and aſcertain your relation to thoſe free and warlike anceſtors who atchieved the moſt heroic deeds of virtue.

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